

Animals & Men

The Journal of The Centre for Fortean Zoology



**Mystery Bears in Oxford and Morocco
Medieval Wildmen, Nessie, The Tatzelwurm,
Bantam Behaviour, Aberrant Lizards, News and reviews**

Issue Two

One Pound and fifty pence.

Animals & Men

Issue Two

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CONTENTS

- p. 3 Editorial
- p. 4 Newsfile
- p. 9 The Woodwose or Wildman in Britain
- p.13 The case against the Plesiosaur in Loch Ness
- p.17 The Oxfordshire Bear
- p.19 Unusual behaviour in Bantams
- p.20 The Tatzelwurm-legendary alpine lizard
- p.21 The search for the Australian Night Parrot
- p.22 Green Lizards in Dorset and Devon
- p.23 The Loch Ness Hoax
- p.24 Nervous Twitch: Cryptoomithology
- p.26 A-Z of Cryptozoology
- p.27 HELP: Atlas Bears and more
- p.30 Book and Magazine reviews
- p 31 FROM OUR FILES: Fox attacks

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The Great Days of Zoology are not done!

Dear Friends,

The response to the first issue of 'Animals and Men' was overwhelming and we have doubled our initial subscriber base in only three months. I would like to thank everyone for their enthusiasm and help. I promised in the last issue that by this issue the magazine would be properly typeset. So it has been but the gremlins which lurk within my cryptozoological cyberspace have not entirely left us, and amongst other things my spellchecker programme has almost entirely ceased to function (leaving me with only the 'spellchecker' to whom I have been married for nearly ten years), and one whole section of the magazine was jeopardised when in attempting to transfer an Ascii file from a Word Processing programme to a DTP one I managed

to delete all the "Is", and "Ls" which is a little tricky when the article you are typesetting is about 'Plesiosaurs', but such minor technicalities apart this magazine is going from strength to strength and we sincerely hope that you will continue to support us. Our eventual aim is to be monthly, A4 and glossy but we have a long way to go before we can achieve this although we feel that this is a reasonably attainable objective.

We are still looking for regional representatives to join the intrepid band listed on the title page and we would love to hear from anyone foolhardy enough to get involved.

Above all we hope that you ENJOY this issue, we certainly had a good time putting it together for you.

Best Wishes,

EDITOR



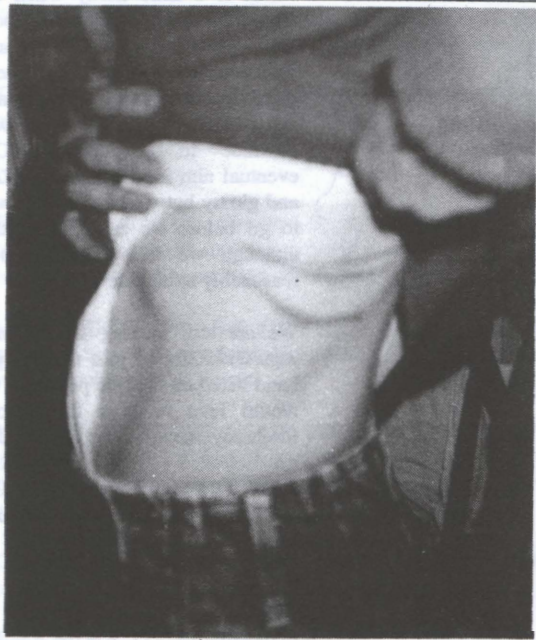
NEWSFILE

Edited and Compiled by Jan Williams with the occasional interjection (and tedious jokes about catfishes) from The Editor and with no assistance whatsoever from The Lakelands Tourist Board!

MYSTERY CATS

Devonshire.

The Beast of Salcombe Regis- focus of the East Devon 'Cat Flap' in spring 1993 returned to the village in March. Neighbours Jane Stevens and Arthur Longbottom spotted the Puma like black cat in the steeply sloping field behind their home. Jane took a photograph of the animal but it was too far away for identification. The cat bounded up the field and into woodland, taking only six leaps to cover a distance of seventy feet. (*Sidmouth Herald* 19.3.94)



"Sally Dyke displays her wounds" Pic Copyright Craig Harris

Midlands. Sally Dyke (left) stated on "3D" (ITV 21/4/94) that she was attacked by a huge black cat in a lonely churchyard at Linkberrow, Worcs. Sally and her husband baited a path with dead chickens in December 1993. Returning to check the bait Nick Dyke stumbled onto the cat which was feeding in long grass. They say the animal lashed out at Sally, ripping through her waxed jacket and scarring her chest. They did not report the incident at the time - Sally, a veterinary lecturer, cleaned the wound herself and took antibiotics to prevent infection.

STOP PRESS; We have just received reports that film of a mystery 'puma' in Norfolk was recently shown on Anglia TV. We have no further details. If anyone has a video can they let us know?

Animals & Men Issue Two

Essex

A large panther-like creature was reported to police at Walton-on-the-Naze in May. Witness David Shearing said the animal was "all black, very sleek, and much longer than a cat. It had a very long tail". (*Wolverhampton Express & Star* 17/5/94)

Isle of Wight

Casts of large pawprints taken in a garden at St John's Wood Road, Ryde, were sent by naturalist Martin Trippett to Dr Karl Shuker for identification. The prints measured 4" by 4.5" and showed no claws. Karl identified the prints as canine rather than feline, and Ryde police were able to confirm that a Great Dane had been reported missing in the area on the previous day. Which confirms yet again that presence or absence of claws on prints cannot be used as a definite indicator of their origin. (*Isle of Wight County Press* 6/5/94, 13/5/94; *Wolverhampton Express & Star* 6/5/94)

Norfolk

Farmer and broadcaster Chris Skinner of Caistor St. Edmund saw a cat-like animal in early May. Chris was driving home at 2.35am when he caught the animal broadside on in car headlights. Seconds before the sighting he had had to swerve to avoid a black labrador running down the road, and the 'cat' was the same length, but slimmer in build, with a small head and thick, downsweped tail which curved up at the end. The colour was a uniform dark sand, with a darker tip to the tail. From photos of a dozen cat species, Chris identified the animal as a puma.

The sighting followed the appearance of a trail of unusual prints on Chris' farm during heavy snow in February. The prints were about two and a half inches across, with pronounced claws and with tail drag apparent between prints. The dead-straight trail showed the animal had made bounds of between 6 and 11 feet and leapt to the top of an 8 foot wall.

Scotland

Twelve year old Robert Clark reported a black panther in woodland near Craithie Church, Grampian, close to the royal estate of Balmoral, in early April. He described the animal as 3 to 4 times the size of a domestic cat, with pointed ears, a long tail, and dark brown patches on the sides of its face. Robert says the large cat walked towards him, snarling and hissing. When it was about 7 feet away, Robert turned and ran. The tabloid press with their typical obsession with sensational and tactless 'royal stories' inferred that this cat was responsible for the disappearance of Prince Charles' dog Pooh. (*News of the World* 24/4/94)

Fox Attacks Child in Nottinghamshire

A fox's savage attack on a sleeping child has mystified wildlife experts in Nottingham. The fox entered the house in Dale Road and bit and scratched four year old Renee Prater, asleep in her bedroom upstairs. Renee's mother has Donna heard screams and rushed upstairs to find the fox

Animals & Men Issue Two

sitting quietly on the bloodstained bed. She rushed outside with the terrified child and took her to a medical centre.

When they returned three hours later, the fox was still sitting on the doorstep. Urban foxes are common in the city but are normally wary of people. An attack of this kind is unheard of although a selection of similar stories 'FROM OUR FILES' can be found on the inside back page. (Daily Mail 24.5.94)

REDISCOVERY OF PARDEL LYNX COLONY.

One of our Spanish Correspondents Alberto Lopez Acha has written with news of the rediscovery of two populations of the Iberian or Pardel Lynx (*Lynx pardina*) between 1980 and 1982. One in Zamora, only 249 km from Madrid and another one in Valencia, 352 km from Barcelona. (Quercus No 3.)

GIANT MUNTIAC IN VU QUANG

Close on the heels (or should that be trotters?) of The Vu Quang Ox, another new large mammal species has been discovered in the Vu Quang Nature Reserve, Northern Vietnam. Rumours of an unknown species of deer in the reserve were confirmed when Dr John Mackinnon and Shanthini Dawson of the joint Vietnamese - WWF survey team examined skull trophies in a native village. Genetic analysis showed the skulls belonged to a new species of deer.

Scientists are calling the deer the 'Giant Muntjac'. Some of its features are unique to muntjacs; large canine teeth, two bony ridges forming a sharp 'v' on top of the face, and 2 glands; but it has much longer brow lines, and longer antlers which are bowed rather than recurved. It also lacks the crest of hair found on the brow of muntjac species, and with an estimated height of 80 cm, and weight up to 50kg, the Giant Muntjac is 50% larger than others. Villagers hunt the animal for meat and up to 20 individuals were trapped in the 6 months prior to January 1994, suggesting that the species is relatively common. Unconfirmed reports suggest the species may also exist in Laos. (BBC Wildlife 12/6/94)

BIGFOOT ON THE BOX

Discerning readers will, no doubt watch the excellent U.S Sci Fi series 'Quantum Leap' in which the only Samuel Beckett not to be a tedious Hibernian playwright has most excellent adventures often with a Fortean theme. The episode screened on BBC 2 on May 24th 1994 featured a rather convincing Bigfoot. The Roger Patterson film of Bigfoot is also featured in the TV advert for 'TAB Clear' a particularly nasty soft drink which in the opinion of the editor tastes a little like a mixture of Tizer and washing up liquid.

COAL EATING TRANSPARENT SHRIMPS

Time is running out for scientists trying to study a colony of crustaceans which have been found deep inside the flooded tunnels of Monkweir Mouth Colliery. They are reported to live

Animals & Men

Issue Two

off coal dust and the occasional fragment of Mincro sandwich. Although experts believe that they are a whole new subspecies (sic) the mine was due to close in May and so the chance to study these surreal creatures will be lost forever. (BBC Newround Teletext 17.5.94)

IT WASN'T ME GUV DEPARTMENT.

Recently there have been a number of hoaxes of interest to crypto pundits (if only to prove that some people; and even some crypto type still believe anything!) Panic swept through Yaounde, the capital of The Cameroons when a radio station warned of a lion loose in the city. People locked doors and windows and a truckload of police were sent out. It turned out, however to be an April Fool day hoax by the radio station. (BBC Newround Teletext 1.4.94)

Another April fool day hoax and one which (much to the surprise of everyone at CFZ Towers) even had quite a few people believing in it was perpetrated by 'Today' who claimed that a flying rabbit had recently been discovered by persons unknown. Several people wondered if it could be a phenomenon allied to the well known mutation which causes 'winged' cats but the accompanying photograph showed what looked like a cute looking bunny crossed with a stuffed seagull. (Today 1.4.94. There was even less documentary evidence for 'Tizzie Wizzie' the legendary flying hedgehog of the lake district which unfortunately turned out to be a figurement of the imagination of some bright spark in the publicity office of the local tourist board.

COOL FOR CATS.

Munir Viriani of the Sokoke Scops Owl Project believes that African Golden Cats (*Felis aurata*), exist in the Arabuko-Sokoke Forest on the Kenyan coast. On several occasions he has seen cats which correspond to the Golden Cat in size and appearance. Twice the animals were accompanied by cubs. (East African Natural History Society)

IGUANA IN NORFOLK.

Rollerskaters nearly ran over a young Green Iguana on a Norwich industrial estate. The eighteen inch lizard (now named 'Lucky') was taken to 'Rons Reptiles' in the city, where the owner, Ron Wells placed him in his colony of Iguanas. Noone seems to know where he came from...except for Lucky and he's not saying. (BBC Newround Teletext 1.4.94)

ARACHNOPHOBIA

The latest 'sport' in pubs at Sparkhill, Birmingham, is Spider Fighting. Bets are placed on fights to the death between poisonous 6" Golden Baboon Spiders and the larger Bird Eating Spiders. RSPCA officials and police are investigating reports. As a lifelong arachnophobe, I'd rather not think about the possible consequences of this one!

ON THE TRACK OF THE FATHER OF CRYPTOZOOLOGY.

Bernard Heuvelmans, the man without whom, quite literally there would be no science of Cryptozoology wrote to us very recently saying nice things about 'Animals and Men' and

exclusively revealing that the ten volumes which comprise his complete Cryptozoological writings are being published IN ENGLISH over the next few years, starting with 'On the Track of Unknown Animals' in September this year (complete with 'a new preface resuming half a century of Cryptozoology') and with the others ('even those not yet published in French') following at a rate of 'two or three a year'.

ALMOST TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE?

I think that we are the first UK publication to print a potentially astounding new story revealed for the first time in this country by Karl Shuker at The Portean Times Convention on 19th June. Roy Mackal, the legendary Cryptozoologist has just returned from Papua New Guinea with what is apparently good quality film footage of a serpentiform marine creature that he has conditionally identified as a surviving Zeuglodon. The film was shot during January this year (the rainy season) at Lake Niu Gini, by a Japanese TV film. The creatures which are known to the native population as 'MIGAU' (surprisingly similar to 'MIGOU' the Sherpa name for The Yeti) live off water birds because the volcanic lake has no fish population. It is this idiosyncratic diet which forces them to feed on the surface of the water and has hence made them ideal targets for cameramen. The films have been shown on Japanese and U.S Television but as yet have not been seen by anyone in Britain. We await further developments with baited breath!

LAST BUT BY NO MEANS LEAST....

Readers of Karl Shuker's excellent book 'The Lost Ark' will have been as excited as we all were by the photographs of extraordinary humped elephants from Nepal. Colonel John Blashford-Snell, who took the photographs of what everyone is hoping may be surviving Stegodons, is going back to Nepal in February 1995 in search of these marvellous beasts and wants volunteers (who can cover their own costs) to

accompany him. Interested? You should be! Write to The Scientific Exploration Society, Expedition Base, Motcombe, Near Shaftsbury, Dorset. SP7 9PB for details (and tell him we sent you). Afficionados of the writings of the man whom Portean Times compared favourably with Indiana Jones are referred to the next issue of this magazine which amongst other things will contain a piece by Colonel Blashford Snell about his search for giant Monitor Lizards in New Guinea.

Newsfile Correspondents.

Bernard Houvelmans, Colonel John Blashford-Snell, Alberto Lopez Acha, Angel Morant Foras, Ben Chapman, Craig Harris, Stephen Shipp, Dr Karl P.N. Shuker.



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The Woodwose or Wild Man in Britain

by Ben Chapman

During the course of this century, a great interest in tracing a 'missing link' in the chain of evolution of *Homo sapiens* has proved popular with archeologists, scientists, folklorists and cryptozoologists alike. Reported sightings of remnant hominids are sure to feature in the headlines of the worlds press, be it in China, South East Asia or the North and South American continents.

Europe and particularly Britain has long enjoyed associations with 'wild men' or as he is more often referred to in England, The Woodwose. The term Moodwose, Wedewasa, Wodwos or Wodewese can be traced back in Britain to the early twelfth century. In medieval art he is usually depicted as a big, strong individual covered in hair, animal skins or leaves and brandishes a huge, rustic club or tree branch. He is often represented in combat with some other creature, a lion, a wyvern or a fellow woodwose.

Sub Species or Forest Dweller?

To place the origins of the British Woodwose in perspective, we must first consider the socio-economic conditions prevailing during the end of the Dark Ages and early medieval Britain, i.e. population, the natural environment, harsh laws, and the bucolic nature of many occupations and crafts. In these current enlightened times of plastic, concrete and a great abundance of other man made materials, we tend to forget the importance of wood which was the mainstay of the early medieval economy, culture and very way of life.

Housing, vehicles, kitchen utensils, handles and hafts for weapons and tools, fuel, enclosures for livestock and furniture, all relied on wood of which then Britain had in abundance. With timber playing such a predominant role in the lives of the people, many occupations and ancillary services were wood intensified. Carvers, builders, sawyers, wheelwrights, charcoal burners, bowyers, furniture makers, boat builders, tool and implement builders, and suppliers of fire wood for cooking and heating the home to name but a few, not only worked with wood but in many cases lived in the woods and the dense forests which provided them with their livelihood. During this period Britain was still relatively densely forested before the great forests were denuded of their timber by a rapacious ship building campaign of the Tudor Monarchs.

Such solitary individuals clad in old working clothes augmented with animal skins, who did not venture far from their sylvan environments, could be regarded as 'odd' or 'wild' by their contemporaries who dwelt on farms or in villages or towns. As well as those who lived and worked with wood in these forests, were others, social outcasts, the disenfranchised peasantry, and those with severe medical afflictions who were spurned by their neighbours. Add to these the people fleeing from unjust taxation, crimes committed for survival such as poaching or stealing food, such crimes invoked severe retribution including mutilation and death. Another major factor for causing people to seek out solitude away from their fellows was the arrival in Britain in 1348 of The Bubonic Plague or Black Death. Forests proved the ideal place in which to lose oneself and to escape this terrible pestilence. Naturally these latter forest dwellers, like their predecessors, would be wary of strangers and hide themselves.

Over the years their clothing would be replaced by more simple garb like animal skins or coarsely woven grass. Their progeny would know no other lifestyle and would develop fully acclimatised to this basic way of living. Hygiene and washing, never a social grace in medieval times would be totally lacking and these hirsute forest dwellers would appear and stink like true animals or 'wild people' which in all respects they actually were!

Conversely they are not a 'missing link' or different sub species of *Homo sapiens*, simply a group of individuals who, through choice or conditions beyond their control have adopted a way of life unique to that of their fellow men.

Even today we read in newspapers of the plight of some hermit or local eccentric living in a simple hut or a similar structure in a wood or quarry fighting off the bureaucrats in defence of his chosen lifestyle, simply because they consider him out of kilter with society, and they know best!

The medieval woodwose or forest dweller who lived in a 'wood house' or forest, would naturally defend his territory and way of life. It is highly probable that there were 'no go areas' in many forests, which were assiduously avoided by the local populace hence the origins of many popular folk tales concerning the evil deeds of wild men and giants. These areas could prove fatal for the unwary traveller, disappearances adding credence to the stories surrounding these almost legendary beings. Fee Fie Po Pum etc!

Homo silvestris

Though the woodwose references to wild men and women in Britain are comparatively 'modern' in the context of the historic time scale, many early references to wild men abound in ancient literature.

The celebrated Roman writer Pliny (23-79) mentions *Sylvestris Homines* as inhabiting what are now known as The Himalayas who 'wander about indiscriminately like wild beasts'. This like many other early references such as the dog faced Cynocephali are probably apes or baboons.

Animals & Men Issue Two

A reference which compounds the theory of wild men as being workers or other human denizens of the forest can be found in *Ars Poetica* by the Roman lyric poet Horace (65-8 BC) who uses the words *Sylvestres Homines* in its classical sense to refer to foresters or uncivilised men.

In the British Museum there is a lamp of the first century AD depicting a hairy man holding along knobbed staff. References to the many curious beings in The travels of Sir John Mandeville published in 1449 are all gleaned from classical sources. It is now thought that Sir John Mandeville is a fictitious character.

The popular medieval image of the woodwose as a coarse, hairy individual wielding a knotted branch for a club can be traced back to a French Bestiary of 1300.

Many examples of the woodwose clad in skins or leaves have found their way into Christian iconography, and are to be found in abundance in many churches and cathedrals in both Europe and Britain especially on misericords. Fine examples can be seen at St Mary's Beverley, Chester Cathedral, Whalley Abbey, Ripon Minster, Holy Trinity, Coventry (in combat with a lion), Lincoln Minster, Exeter Cathedral, St Mary Faverham, Manchester Cathedral (two mounted woodwoses in combat), Beverley Minster (fighting a dragon), and Westminster Abbey.

Typical of the medieval romances is the story of Valentine and Orson. They were two brothers who were separated at birth. Valentine was raised at court with all the privileges of a gentleman and a knight, Orson was brought up by bears in a forest and developed into a formidable wildman. The King, troubled by stories of a giant killing and terrorising his subjects sent Valentine to seek out and slay this giant. When he at last confronted the giant Valentine was disarmed and about to be killed when a wildman appeared and dispatched the giant with a mighty club. The wildman was indeed Orson and the brothers were reunited. Valentine took Orson back to court with him, where his brother became his champion and protector.

The Woodwose in Heraldry

The science of heraldry boasts many a woodwose or wildman as a supporter to a coat of arms, he is also quite a common charge and is often encountered as a crest.

The heraldic woodwose is usually blazoned as being wreathed about the temples and loin with leaves, mainly oak leaves and carries an eradicated tree or wooden club, or occasionally another weapon such as a sword or axe.

He is to be found supporting the arms of the Duke of Fife, and the families of Douglas, Menzies, and Carr. The arms of Poulett are unique in having; *dexter a savage man and sinister a savage woman*. The crest of the family Walton has a standing woodwose holding in his right hand a trefoil and over his left shoulder an eradicated tree. A savages head is borne on the arms of the families Eddington and Gladstone.



'A carving from St Mary's, Beverley, Yorkshire'
Copyright Chapman Misericord Library.

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Ben Chapman has a large archive of misericord photographs of mermaids, wildmen and many other medieval creatures. Anyone interested in this particular subject contact him at 10 Young Street, Withernsea, East Yorkshire HU19 2DX

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Near Lizard...but not near Enough!

by Stuart Leadbetter

During the summer of 1993 and the hype surrounding the coming to Britain of the film *Jurassic Park* the Loch Ness Monster was twice seen and photographed. With all the talk of dinosaurs in the press it was only natural that journalists would group Nessie together with the extinct giants in the resulting news reports.

A favourite candidate for the identity of The Loch Ness Monster is the Plesiosaurus, a creature which was a contemporary of the dinosaurs. The story writers have compared this reptile with the stars of Steven Spielberg's film and have found similarities. To them dinosaurs and Nessie are one and the same. This assumption is very wrong and highly misleading to the general public.

Plesiosaurs were more closely related to lizards and crocodiles than dinosaurs and it is for this very reason that the identity of the Loch Ness Monster must lie in a different direction. Presented below are the arguments to support my lack of belief in the living fossil hypothesis which is still popular at Loch Ness.

The Question of Respiration.

At Loch Ness the chances of witnessing a surfacing of one of the monsters are very low. Only a lucky few have such an honour. This tends to suggest that the monsters cannot be dependent on breathing surface air. Evidence from the use of Sonar seems to bear this out.

In his book *The Monsters of Loch Ness*, Professor Roy Machal compared the diving profiles of a Weddell Seal (*Leptonychotes weddelli*) and a Sonar contact obtained from the Loch.

The profile of the air breathing seal is very characteristic. It makes a deep dive from the surface and returns to it all in the space of 10 minutes whereas the contact is first detected at the depth of 200 feet but only for two and a half minutes, whereupon it dives so deeply that it is lost from the sonar coverage only to be picked up again five minutes later, again at the depth of 200 feet the whole episode having lasted the same amount of time as the seals.

Professor Machal considers this behaviour to be totally foreign to any of the Loch's known fish species, and I agree wholeheartedly. The creature that was responsible for the contact could not have possessed a closed swim bladder because such rapid changes in depth are impossible with such a device.

The creature must have an ability to extract oxygen from the surrounding water presumably either through the skin or by the use of gills. This would seem to rule out a Plesiosaur as the creature responsible for the contact. Plesiosaurs were definitely air breathers and like all sea creatures of this ilk they would be dependant on air - the main weakness of such animals.

The Behaviour of Plesiosaurs

Whilst holidaying in Norwich during the summer of 1989 I visited the local museum to view the various events on show. To my great surprise, I discovered a painting which depicted two Plesiosaurs fighting, some fossil bones from a Plesiosaur paddle and a few small paragraphs which commented on the uncanny resemblance between the Plesiosaur and the sightings from Loch Ness, but it was the painting that drew my attention rather than the other two exhibits. If this painting was a faithful rendition of typical Plesiosaur behaviour (and I have no reason to believe that it isn't), and if the Loch Ness creatures are indeed Plesiosaurs then why has noone reported such distinctive activity at Loch Ness?

One of the following two statements are usually given:

- (1) They are shy and wary of man and his ways.
- (2) Being Plesiosaurs, they have two nostrils set high on the head, so that when they require more air they only have to expose this part of their body in order to do so.

Such explanations have some validity, but we are talking about real live Plesiosaurs here. You would expect such creatures to indulge in the same activities that other animals do constantly, hunting for food, patrolling for territory, and especially mating (for the main purpose of an animals existence is the succesful passing on of its genes to the next generation) This urge to procreate is so strong that it is still performed even when outside influences begin to interfere.

Would 'real' Plesiosaurs perform their courtships underwater (like in Sir Peter Scott's painting *'Courtship at Loch Ness'*), or would they perform them on the surface of the lake or even on dry land?

I cannot see that it would be possible for any male Plesiosaur in Loch Ness to succesfully woo a female underwater. The low level of visibility underwater has been stated in every book or magazine article ever written about the Loch and its monster. How could a male show off before its intended partner if it could not see further than ten feet in the gloomy water? Visibility in the Mesozoic oceans where the ancestral plesiosaurs lived was probably so much better. A predatory hunter like the Plesiosaur would not be able to afford a colourful skin with which to attract a mate under such conditions because this would only make them highly conspicuous to their prey.

It would appear therefore that the only possible answer is that the creatures must have conducted their courtship rituals at the surface. They could then have retained their normal colour scheme used in hunting, but when was the last report that you heard from Scotland

Animals & Men Issue Two

of two large humped monsters carrying out a courtship routine on the surface of the Loch oblivious to whoever was watching? When seen at the surface the creatures are usually alone in the rare event of there being more than one creature visible there is seldom any friction between them to indicate any kind of mating behaviour.

Lack of Land Sightings

In the early days of the Loch Ness saga there were many instances of the monsters being seen ashore, but from then until the present day the number of land sightings has dwindled away to nothing. If the creatures who had been responsible for the earlier reports had indeed been Plesiosaurs such a reluctance to come ashore would be very puzzling, and would perhaps even be a trend that could lead to their long overdue extinction.

Paleontologists commonly believe that Plesiosaurs were egg laying creatures. When the time was due for laying they would swim to some isolated island or estuary, clamber ashore, excavate a pit into which would be placed the precious eggs, and then return to the sea. Some of the people who support the case for living Plesiosaurs in Loch Ness argue that some Plesiosaurs might have given birth to living young, neatly explaining why nobody has seen a Plesiosaur weighing several tons digging up the Loch's rocky shoreline.

Of the two methods of reproduction, the case for Plesiosaurs being Egg Layers is the stronger for several reasons.

The sea has always been a place of great danger for young animals. The seas of the Mesozoic were no exception. In them lived such mighty hunters as the Ichthyosaurs, the ancestors of today's sharks and several other branches of the Plesiosaur family. It would not appear to be advantageous to Plesiosaurs to introduce living young to such an uncertain world. It doesn't take much imagination to realise that such defenceless creatures wouldn't last very long. A far better option would be to retain their young in eggs and to deposit them in relative safety on land well away from marine predators. This may well eliminate one source of predation but it now presents another. The way to counter this secondary threat is illustrated by present day Crocodiles and Turtles. They either construct a nest (in the case of crocodiles), or excavate a hole which is filled in after the eggs have been laid (in the case of turtles). It would seem likely that Plesiosaurs did something of the kind.

Now another question arises. Did Plesiosaurs simply abandon their eggs after laying them like turtles, or did they stand guard over them like crocodiles? I think it likely that they could have made use of either strategy depending on the type of land where the eggs were laid. If the eggs were laid on a small island, for example, the possibility of indigenous predators would be low. Under these circumstances the eggs would be abandoned. If, however the creature had chosen to lay its eggs on the shores of a large continent they would require protection as such a land mass would be teeming with predators!

Applied to Loch Ness, this would mean that at certain times of the year Plesiosaurs should be easily visible either laying their eggs on the shore or patrolling a section of the Loch on a regular basis. Clearly this isn't the case!

The Neck of the Plesiosaur.

In restorations of Plesiosaur skeletons the most striking feature is the long, graceful neck. During the history of the phenomena of Loch Ness sightings of such long necks have been made on numerous occasions. There appears to be a correlation here. No other Marine or Freshwater animal known to science as being alive today has a neck of comparable length so the case for living Plesiosaurs in Loch Ness would appear to be extremely strong on this point. Or is it?

Ever since the first Plesiosaur skeletons were discovered Paleontologists have argued about how flexible the necks of these creatures must have been, and what their purpose was. Certainly they were efficient enough to catch fish with, but was this their only use? I think not. All the other parts of the Plesiosaur had more than one use so why not the neck as well? It has been theorised that the neck was of such a length because the Plesiosaur developed it as a kind of periscope to scan above the waves at the surface for prey, but there could be yet another use for such a long neck, and one which would also be directly tailored to the pursuit of prey.

Again referring to Professor Macdonald's book *The Monsters of Loch Ness*, we come across a reference to the stomach contents of a fossil Plesiosaur. Not only containing the normal prey items of a fish and a cephalopod it also contained the remains of a Pterodactyl inferring that it must have been snatched out of the air by the scavenging Plesiosaur.

This then is the additional advantage of a long neck for what was a primarily sea based creature - the ability to catch airborne prey, but here again we see the paradox of the Loch Ness evidence. In all the thousands of sightings, not one describes Nessie plucking a bird from the air in mid flight.

Conclusion.

So what is the true identity of the mysterious denizens of The Loch? I don't know. We have some information on various parts of their anatomy, but no idea of what a complete monster looks like. Some results give us the impression that they don't require air to breathe, but for reasons unknown they are still occasionally seen at the surface, but of one thing I'm sure. Loch Ness doesn't harbour any near lizards (the literal English Translation of Plesiosaur), but that somewhere in the depths lurk creatures whose body form can easily be mistaken for one.

It Ain't Nessiecerally so..

If we know anything at all about the way that monster hunters minds work then we expect a hail of controversy to result from the above article. We are not taking sides but will present all sides of the discussion until the matter is finally resolved. We would, however like to receive feedback about this article from the pro-plesiosaur lobby of Loch Ness Investigators and indeed anyone else with views on the subject. At the recent Fortean Times conference we met veteran Nesswatcher Rip Hepple, the editor of Nessletter. We suggest that anyone interested in the Loch Ness phenomenon contact him at 7 Huntshield Ford, St John's Chapel, Bishop Auckland, Co Durham, DL13 1RQ

If you go down to the woods today.....

the Bear facts from Jan Williams.

The ancient forest of Wychwood, straddling the border of Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire, was once a favoured hunting ground of kings. In the nineteenth century it was a wild and lawless place, the haunt of highwaymen, Black Dogs, and the dreaded Snow Foresters - strange spirits whose howls and screams could be heard echoing through winter nights, and which were known to attack snowbound travellers.

Remnants of this ancient woodland still exist along the valley of the Evenlode. Despite its proximity to the busy modern city of Oxford and the tourist traps of the Cotswolds, Wychwood remains a secret forest, a refuge for fox, badger and deer, and a memory of Old England.

Residents of Charlbury, within the forest bounds, have taken a lighthearted view of reports of a bear roaming the woods. The village baker sold "*Buns to feed the Bear*", the butcher displayed "*Bear Steaks*" in his window, and local publicans played host to bear-suited regulars.

Charlbury's previous claim to cryptozoological fame lay with 'Skippy', an escapee wallaby which bounded around the village for a few months in 1985. Wallabies are becoming commonplace in England, but the wolf which killed 14 sheep in 1935 was more of a rarity. An escapee from Oxford Zoo at Kidlington, it was tracked down by a photographer from the Oxford Mail. Face to face with the wolf, he decided that discretion was the better part of valour and shot it with gun rather than camera.

Whilst many villagers are sceptical regarding the bear, Mr Waring, landlord of 'The Bull' at Charlbury, is keeping an open-mind. He has tracked bears in Canada, and believes a bear could easily survive in the area. "*It is the right sort of terrain, and there is plenty of food in the woods.*" And he has found large and unusual prints in the woods, though sadly these were too distorted for a definite identification.

The main witness is John Blackwell, who runs a mixed farm at Dean and keeps a variety of livestock. In September 1992, Mr Blackwell saw an unusual animal near his 21-acre wood. Remembering 'Skippy', his first thought was of a wallaby "*with its tail chopped off*", but closer sightings on the following two nights convinced him that it was a bear.

The animal was the size of an Old English Sheepdog, with small pointed ears, "*massive great hocks*", and no tail. Its thick fur was a dark rusty-brown, with lighter sandy-brown patches on belly and flanks. The ears were held down, and it walked on all fours with a pronounced "*waddling*" motion.

The 'bear' was not seen again for several months, but there were indications that something strange was living in the woods. Huge prints were found on the land, the farm dogs barked continually in the area of a thickly overgrown bank, and two fish ponds on the farm were visited by some large animal which left a trail of smashed and flattened rushes. On one occasion cows on the farm were so badly frightened that they refused to eat for five days.

In late May 1993, Mr Blackwell heard a strange hooting noise from the wood. He walked towards the sound, thinking at first that it was a cockerel crowing, but as he got nearer it changed to a continuous howl. Two fallow deer were grazing on the woodland edge. As they moved off, the bear-like animal came out of the trees, following them at a run. It left huge prints, which Mrs Blackwell measured against her size 9 wellingtons. The prints were larger and showed long claws. On the following day the animal appeared again. It was lying in long grass and put its head up as the farmer approached. Mr Blackwell estimated that it was a third larger than in the previous September. The farmer says none of his livestock have been attacked and the animal seems curious rather than aggressive towards people. He felt it should be left alone, and only came forward when other reports appeared in the press.

In January of this year, bus driver Greg Gilbert and passenger Sarah Cooper saw a reddish-brown animal walk across the Charlbury road. In contrast to Mr Blackwell's sightings, the creature walked upright, on its hind legs. Another witness, James Graham-Cloete of Chadlington, stated he had seen it standing by the roadside. A spokesman for the nearby Cotswold Wildlife Park was dismissive. He suggested witnesses were seeing a badger. But John Blackwell is a traditional farmer with an interest in wildlife, who sits up at night and watches badgers. A bear in Oxfordshire may seem unlikely, but is it any more likely that a man who has been watching badgers for twenty years should suddenly mistake one for an exotic animal?

Press reports of unusual animals often encourage other witnesses to come forward, and it seems the 'bear' is not the only strange creature roaming Wychwood. Earlier this year, Mrs Nicky Sherbrook, of Taston near Dean, was surprised to find one of her sheep killed and half-eaten. She said it had been "ripped to shreds". Shortly afterwards, Mrs Sherbrook's 17-year-old son, Harry, was walking with a friend in a field bordering onto woodland when they disturbed a fox-sized animal. It was a light silvery colour, with a black stripe down the spine, a flat cat-like head, and a big bushy tail. It ran very quickly down the field and into the woods, passing a third boy who dashed up to ask the others what it was. All three teenagers are used to foxes, and were quite certain it was not one.

It looks as though Oxfordshire's 'secret forest' is harbouring cryptic creatures - or was that a Snow Forester howling in the woods?

* * * *

Additional Refs:

Oxford Mail 27/1/94, 28/1/94, 3/2/94

Daily Mail 23/2/94, 25/2/94

Is this "Animal" Behaviour?

by 'Paterfamilias'

When the children were young we kept bantams, 'Bunter' a cockerel had a number of assorted 'wives' over whom he fussed, behaving more like an elderly father with a family of young girls than a devoted and hard working 'husband'.

I didn't take too much notice of the bantams - they were, in fact a bit of a nuisance because they scratched about in the garden where they shouldn't have scratched and generally made a nuisance of themselves, but one morning when the boys were at school, I happened to be passing by the shed in which the bantams roosted and in which there were some old, full-sized nest boxes, when I became aware of a strange hissing noise. Having lived and worked for some years in the West African 'bush', my first thought was of snakes, but thankfully snakes that make that sort of noise are rare in the west of England, and I tiptoed to the door of the shed and peered in. There I saw a remarkable sight.

'Bunter' with his wings outstretched, was gently driving one of his 'wives' into one of the nest boxes. She didn't want to go, not one little bit, she didn't but 'Bunter' was very firm, and he pushed and nudged her, all the time, making a curious, un-birdlike noise. Eventually, she entered and he stood outside, as it were, on guard, until she settled down on her nest. The following morning she had laid an egg - her first and I couldn't help wondering how 'Bunter' knew that she was about to deliver.

After this episode I took a greater interest in the activities of the bantam family. 'Bunter' was clearly very much in charge and he took his duties very seriously and I enjoyed watching him scratching in the vegetable garden, uncovering worms, not for himself but for his 'wives' who stood back and let him do all the work.

Then one evening I witnessed a scene which I shall never forget. I normally went around the garden towards dusk, shutting up the greenhouse and turning the lock on the shed door, but on this particular evening, I cannot remember why, I was late and it was almost dark. As I approached the shed, again I heard another strange noise, not a bit like the hissing which had accompanied the nest box incident. This time it was more like a cat's purr, only louder. I switched on my hand lantern and there, on the perch, was 'Bunter', with both his wings outstretched and four of his 'wives' cuddling up close to him, two on each side, literally under his wings as he 'sang' his song to them and they settled down for the night.

I have always disliked anthropomorphism and people who treat their pets as if they were humans make me feel slightly bilious, but there was no doubt that 'Bunter' the little bantam cockerel, was exhibiting what we somewhat arrogantly call 'human' characteristics- and then I wondered. Did 'Bunter' say to his wives:

"My dears, isn't it extraordinary how some humans behave just like Bantams?"

Alpine Enigma

by Roger Hutchings

My earliest encounter with the subject known as cryptozoology took place sixty years ago in Paris. In 1934 I was an expatriate teenager washing dishes in the restaurant kitchen at *Le Dome* in the *Boulevard Montparnasse*. During the afternoon break between lunch and dinner service I often used to visit the nearby Natural History Museum, outside which a vociferous old gentleman was wont to parade bearing a sandwich board proclaiming that **THERE ARE BIPED LIZARDS IN THE ALPS!**

In conversation with him I learnt that despite a mass of witnessed evidence presented to the authorities over many years his claim had been persistently dismissed, and his demonstration was in protest at the official denial of the facts as known to him. His name was Maurice Mascé, born and bred in the Alps of Provence where he asserted that biped lizards were commonplace, as they were throughout the Alpine region spreading through Switzerland and southern Bavaria and into Austria.

He corrected my initial presumption that the creatures moved upright on hind legs by explaining that they possessed only forelegs, despite which they moved swiftly when observed, to vanish from sight into rocky retreats in the mountain heights where they dwelt. He also told me that where he came from, in the sparsely inhabited countryside of Upper Provence, they were taken for granted and that all his neighbours could affirm their reality, as accepted by his and their forebears for generations past. He added that other forelegged species found in Central America, at a comparable latitude, were scientifically accepted, and in his opinion they confirmed yet another significant link with the lost continent of Atlantis.

My abiding curiosity about unrecognised creatures learnt nothing further about these Alpine lizards until reading Bernard Heuvelmans' *"On the Track of Unknown Animals"* (originally published in French in 1955 and in English in 1958). This described a *"stumpy lizard at least two to three feet long"* living in The Alps and frequently encountered but never captured to be classified scientifically. Recorded observers agreed that it was more or less cylindrical in shape with a wide mouth and large, round eyes. Those who had seen it at close quarters asserted that it had short forelegs but no hind legs at all. Heuvelmans devoted over four pages to the subject with reports and drawings from nineteenth century sources and a photograph said to have been taken in Switzerland in 1934.

In the German speaking Alps the creature is called various names including, notably *Berggatzten*, *Stollenwurm* and *Tatzelwurm*. In the French Alps of Provence where I resided between 1964 and 1968, it was known to my neighbours as *'Le Gros'* (the big one), although some older folk said that their parents or grandparents used the patois name *"Arasas"*. Everyone loudly claimed to have seen it at least once, and those whose activities took them to the more solitary areas- shepherds, herb and truffle gatherers-referred to it with casual familiarity. They said that the creature could often be observed basking in sunlight close to holes or clefts in the rocks, into which it would vanish with lightning speed if disturbed. Those who

had viewed it briefly at close quarters described it in terms which closely echoed those quoted by Heuvelmans. I should add that none of my witnesses' reports were the outcome of leading questions, and that certainly none of them were aware of the existence of Heuvelmans' book.

Readers who collect examples of Fortean "coincidence" may be interested to learn that amongst the Provencal witnesses was a lavender grower who found a "flying saucer" parked on his land in 1965. Two little beings with pointed chins, slit mouths and eyes that curved round the sides of their heads emerged and immobilised him by pointing a pencil-shaped instrument at him before retreating into their vehicle and ascending into the sky. His name was Maurice Masse, and in common with his namesake outside the Museum in Paris his story was dismissed by the scientific authorities. Of particular significance is the fact that before this experience he was entirely unaware of the worldwide UFO and extraterrestrial phenomena. (For further details: *Flying Saucer Review* 14:7).

A Hard Day's Night Parrot

by Alison Downes.

A month long expedition to Cooper's Creek in N.E. Australia in December '93 was, unfortunately unsuccessful in locating the elusive Night Parrot (*Geopsittacus occidentalis*). The main reason for this failure is believed to be the heavy rains over the last two years in that region giving many more waterholes for birds to drink at, and therefore vastly expanding the range available to them. Many people believe this bird will once again be found as a living species. Reliable but unconfirmed sightings have been turning up at regular intervals during the 20th Century, including the sighting of four specimens at Cooper's Creek in 1979 and at a Dam near Alice Springs (date unknown). Remains of birds have also been found after having been killed and eaten by feral cats and nomadic aborigines. A more exciting discovery was made in 1990 when Walter Bowles, an Australian Ornithologist, found a recently killed Night Parrot which had been hit by a car, near Mr Isa in Queensland. This was no doubt unfortunate for the bird but at least it proved that the species was still in existence.

The Night Parrot is a short dumpy bird, very shy in its habits, and mostly ground dwelling. To make matters even harder in tracing it is that although some sources have described it as 'flightless' it has been reported that it can actually fly for extensive distances especially at night. It is also known to spend most of the day in rocky caves or in self made tunnels in the tussocks of grasses. At dusk it comes out to feed on grasses and seeds. For people wishing to see what it looks like may I refer them to the excellent Zoological Museum at Tring, where they have a mounted specimen of an adult male which lived for a very short time in captivity at London Zoological Gardens in 1867.

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Green Lizards in Devon and Dorset?

Herptological anomalies from Jonathan Downes.

An 1877 resume of the Reptiles of Devonshire includes the European Green Lizard (*Lacerta viridis*) a species not recognised as a member of the British Herptofauna (except in The Channel Islands), although it is a common species in fossil and sub fossil deposits. It is generally thought to have died out during the last Ice Age and not to be hardy enough to withstand the rigours of a British Winter. The 1877 record is particularly interesting, (and I quote it in full) (1)

"I include this species on the authority of two Gentlemen, namely J.E.C.Walkley Esq, Ide and W.R.Crabbe Esq of East Wonford. Mr Walkley informs me that he has known this animal to have been taken in the county; and the latter gentleman saw two specimens near the memorial erected to the memory of the late Mr Fish at Sidmouth in June 1869. Whether these specimens had escaped from confinement I have no means of knowing but the warm, dry locality in which they were seen on the edge of the cliff may secure them from molestation. A specimen was also seen at Bickleigh Vale.

Mr John Wolley in Zoologist p 2707 wrote 'seven or eight years ago a school fellow of mine at Eton, a native of Guernsey assured me that he had seen lizards in Devonshire precisely similar to those of his own land'.

It is hard to dismiss all of these records as either a misidentified specimen of one of the native species or an escapee.

Over the county border in Dorset reports of this species are even more widespread. The correspondence in the Proceedings of the Dorset Natural History and Antiquarian Field Club over the three years 1928-30 is not only interesting but it provides valuable insights into the importance of hearsay and local oral traditions (which are after all the basis for all folklore) and the study and indeed the mythologisation process, of all unknown animals. The definitive reference is from 1928 (2):

"Two letters from Mr R.B.Charlton raised an interesting question as to the occurrence of the large Green Lizard (*Lacerta viridis*) in Dorset. He tells me that he has received many from the country where though not native they are well established and fairly numerous. The species has a length of about fifteen inches whereas the two native species are about seven and five and a half inches respectively...I have never seen these large lizards from Dorset except on one occasion when on lifting a very large stone at Ringstead in about 1908, in search of Beetles, a very large greenish lizard was beneath. The lizard is said to have occurred near Warcham..."

The same article notes that a famous 18th Century naturalist recorded Green Lizards of an unknown species, but which he presumed were *L Viridis* from Surrey, but I have been

unable to confirm this.

The following year four further records were noted (3):

"Mr W.R.G.Bond reported having seen one probably about 1902, crossing the road not far from Kingbarrow near the Holme Toll Bar on the Warcham - Tynham Road. Mr L.G.Pike writes to Mr Bond that he knows nothing of the large species as occurring although the two smaller kinds frequent his garden and. he has heard it said that there are larger ones on the heath. Taken in conjunction with Daniel's report in the early sixties of 'three or four' specimens half a mile south of Warcham and the Ringstead specimen Mr Bond's record may be significant."

In 1930 (4) the debunking process was begun with the whole episode being dismissed as sightings of aberrant Sand Lizards (*Lacerta agilis*) of the green form. The difference in size between the seven inch Sand Lizards and the fifteen inch Green Lizards being completely ignored as is the local oral tradition recounted in both the previous reports. This local tradition is probably the most valuable piece of evidence in the whole affair, because as I have found colouration morphs of the European *Lacertidae* vary widely and can make positive identification difficult. For example; at the end of the 1970s I obtained a freshly killed lizard which turned out to be almost certainly a very unusually marked Common Lizard. In the best traditions of Fortean discovery, however the corpse disappeared under extremely unusual circumstances before I was able to make a firm identification...my parents cat ate it!

It is the geographical area in which all of these sightings, both in Dorset and in Devon have occurred which makes the accidental occurrence of *L. viridis* within a relatively small area, seem not at all unlikely. The animals could well have originated from specimens which came into the country from France and disembarked surreptitiously at Weymouth which has historically had a widespread cross channel traffic. The species is widespread on The Channel Islands as well and it would seem even more likely that lizards from Jersey and Guernsey could have been accidentally imported in cargos of vegetables as traffic from these islands, being part of the United Kingdom are not subjected to such stringent administrative controls as those from mainland Europe.

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**NESS
THAN
ZERO**
by Petrovic

With all the controversy over the alleged debunking of the 'Surgeons Photo' by people who claim that even if the photo IS a fake, a monster could not have been fabricated out of plastic wood and a tin submarine- at least not in the early 1930s, on one of the sillier but ultimately oddly disturbing coincidences of the case has been ignored. Two of the main protagonists, Weatherall and Spurling have the names of characters in 'Time Enough for Love' and other novels by Robert Heinlein. Lets face it, the whole scam feels like something Lazarus Long would have thought up! Maybe 'World as Myth' isn't such a stupid idea after all!

NERVOUS TWITCH

Our regular peek through Fortean Binoculars at the areas of Ornithology where even seasoned Twitchers sometimes fear to tread!

I'll name that fowl in...

A small yellow, orange and green bird discovered in the Choco area of Columbia hit the media recently, when an offer to allow someone to name the species for the sum of £75,000 or was made. The bird was discovered in 1991 by an expedition from Anglia University lead by Paul Saloman. He has made the offer in order to raise money to preserve the rain forest where the bird lives. All cheques should be made payable to 'Birdlife International'. (*Birdkeeper* June 1994 ; *Wolverhampton Express and Star* 23.4.94)

Wild Goose Chases.

A man called William Lishman has been trying to train his sixteen geese. He set up an experiment to see whether captive bred birds could be taught to migrate. He managed to lead them to Virginia using an aeroplane last autumn, but they have since disappeared. If they don't turn up soon he has said that he will go out and look for them. (*BBC Newsround Teletext* 6.4.94) Another odd avian experiment has proved that the Ostrich (a highly excitable bird at the best of times) is calmed down by music..especially that of Andrew Lloyd Webber? I hope they don't play them the theme from 'Cats'! (*BBC1 Countryfile* 27.4.94)

Its in the papers..its got to be true!

Many wild birds including Magpies, Rooks and various finches have albino mutations. An interesting Victorian display of these can be found in Taunton County Museum, which also contains some deliberate fakes. Some aviculturalists specialise in breeding mutations of British Birds and funnily enough a photograph of one such captive bred, and close ringed albino Blackbird was used by The Daily Mail to illustrate their feature article on mutations, as 'spotted in the wild'. Journalists eh? (*Cage and Aviary Birds* 11.6.94)

Row over British List Revisions

Twitchers have been shaken up recently by a controversial decision from the British Ornithology Records Committee to omit several species from the UK List. They claim that The Asian Brown Flycatcher, The Mugimaki Flycatcher and Pallas' Rose Finch (which have only been seen once in the British Isles) are escapees from captivity whilst the Twitching Fraternity is adamant that they are true vagrants. The BOU has also deleted three American Sub Species of bird from the British list because it now seems certain that the recorder, legendary naturalist Richard Meinertzhagen was lying when he claimed to have shot them in The Hebrides. Meinertzhagens Warbler from Morocco has also been disproved and much of

The fine work that Meinertzhagen did has now been tainted. Thanks to David Bromwich at the Taunton Local History Library for the clippings. (*Daily Mail* 30.5.94 ; *The Times* 7.5.94 ; *Daily Mail* 6.5.94)

DUCK!!!

A Muscovy Duck has apparently been terrorising the Bedfordshire village of Toddington attacking villagers and even ripping off the trousers of one elderly man. Local residents are trying to get it sent to a bird sanctuary but not suprisingly noone wants to catch it! (*BBC Teletext Newsround* 23.6.94) More avian aggression was reported from Michigan, USA when a flock of turkeys caused traffic chaos and the State Troopers had to be called in. The turkeys became veryt agitated and started "*Clucking and gobbling in an intimidating manner*". The troopers had to use pepper spray to disperse them. (*ITV Teletext news* 17.4.94)

WHAT CAN YOU SAY ABOUT CURLEWS?

A pair of Eskimo Curlews (*Numenius borealis*) thought to have been practically extinct since the 19th Century have been sighted at the traditional wintering area in Argentina. Two eggs were discovered last year in Canada, and there were four reliable reports of the species in 1987. The birds, once common were killed in large numbers by hunters as they migrated, (*BBC Newsround Teletext* 3.5.94 ; *Channel 4 Teletext Green News* 3.5.94 ; *Illustrated Encyclopaedia of Birds*)

THE FABULOUS FURRY FREAK FOWL.

A racing pigeon fancier was in court recently accused of growing Cannabis . He claimed that he grew the hemp seed purely for his pigeons, and said that they had won more races since he had been giving them tea made from the leaves. I would have thought that birds raised on such a diet would be more likely to coo incoherently for a while, eat ridiculous amounts of corn and then go to sleep in the corner of their loft! (*Cage and Aviary Birds* 28.5.94)

...IN A PEAR TREE

Gamekeeper Granger Jordan was fined £250 for breach of the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act when he released 92 Chukar Partridges on an estate in Norfolk. There is a very real danger that the native British species may disappear as a result of hybridisation with this European species. (*C4 Teletext Green News* 22.4.94)

POLLY WANTS A CRACKER ALREADY

Many pet birds can 'talk' but few can dance! One bird who can is Ronnie a parrot given to the son of an Israeli Military Advisor by Idi Amin in 1961. The son spent many hours teaching the bird to dance to Jewish tunes, but when he died in the 1973 Middle East War the bird was passed on to Bird Sanctuary owner Mr Eytan Porat. Seven months ago, however the bird was stolen, Mr Parrot (whoops Porat!) visited Tel Aviv Bird Market regularly looking for Ronnie. Eventually he spotted the bird and called the Police. They weren't too impressed by his claim until Ronnie danced and kissed Mr Porat proving his identity, (*Cage and Aviary Birds* 16.4.94)

The A-Z of Cryptozoology

Part two of Jan Williams' exhaustive trek through the Cryptozoological alphabet

BADIGUI: Large amphibious dinosaur-like creature, reported from lakes and rivers of the Central African Republic. Said to keep its body submerged and stretch the long neck to browse upon lakeside vegetation. The neck is smooth-skinned, lighter ventrally than dorsally and terminates in a flat head.

BAGENZA; Large ape, or ape-man, reported from Zaire.

BAI-XIONG; White bear of Shennongjia Province, China, which may be albinistic morph, or sub-species of the Brown Bear (*Ursus arctos*), or possibly a separate species. Several are held in Chinese zoos.

BAKANGA; Mystery cat of Central African Republic, with red-brown coat bearing leopard-like spots. Said to bark like a dog.

BAN-MANUSH; Yeti-like ape-man of Bangladesh.

BARMOUTH MONSTER; Creature seen on Llanaber Beach, North Wales, in 1975. Described as "like a dinosaur", ten feet in length, with a long tail and neck and huge green eyes. The feet were like huge saucers, each with three claws.

BATUTUT; Small Bornean ape-man resembling the Orang pendek of Sumatra.

BEAST OF LE GEVAUDAN; Carnivore which terrorised Languedoc, France, from 1764 to 1767. Held responsible for deaths of up to 100 people. Initial reports concerned a donkey-sized beast, with a long tail, reddish hair and a piglike snout, but wolves and werewolves were implicated over the years. In June 1767 a strange creature was shot and was dissected by a court surgeon. It was 5 feet, 7.5 inches long, 32 inches high, and had 40 teeth. No clear description exists, and the beast was never identified.

BRENTFORD GRIFFIN; Winged dog-like creature reportedly seen flying over Brentford, West London, in 1984 and 1985.

BIGFOOT: Giant ape-man of North America. Reports date back to the early 19th century, with sightings in most mainland states and concentrations in the Pacific North-West and Florida. Bigfoot ranges from 6 to 11 feet in height, with very broad shoulders and chest, an ape-like head, and legs, feet and hands resembling those of a human. It is covered in hair, generally reddish-brown, occasionally black, white, beige or silver. Characteristics include a revolting smell, eyes which glow ed, yellow or green, and unearthly screams. Material evidence consists of footprints measuring from 12 to 22 inches in length and having 2 - 6 toes (most commonly 5). Film taken by Roger Patterson and Bob Gimlin in 1967 remains controversial. Some Bigfoot reports are associated with UFO sightings and paranormal phenomena.

HELP

(The Coleopterous visual pun is dropped this issue due to lack of space)

Each issue we try to answer readers' questions on any subject of Fortean Zoological interest. Alberto Lopez Acha from Spain asked for information about the Atlas Bear that we mentioned briefly in the last issue. Many thanks to Dr Karl Shuker for help in my research for this article (shucks, he was the research for this article)

THE ONLY BEAR IN AFRICA?

The Brown Bear (*Ursos arctos*) is an ancient and widely distributed species that once ranged across much of the Northern Hemisphere. Like The Wolf or The Tiger, it is one of the most easily recognised animal archetypes in human culture, and like the aforementioned species, its status is' becoming so precarious in certain parts of its range, that certain subspecies and regional races of *U. arctos* are of more interest to the Cryptozoologist than to his more conventional cousin who has already consigned them to extinction.

The High Atlas mountains of Morocco are areas of great Cryptozoological interest. If The Barbary Lion (*Panthera leo leo*) still exists in the wild it will be here, there are a few surviving Barbary Leopards (*P.pardus panthera*) there are persistent reports of 'ape men' (although they usually turn out to be the children of mentally deficient Tuareg tribesmen) and until fairly recently it was the last stronghold of the only species of bear to live in Africa in historic times. (The semi mythical 'Nandi Bear' of East Africa is most probably nothing of the sort. Two of the most popular suggested identities for this classic cryptid are a surviving Chalicothere or a giant Hycna).

Although the 'Libyan Bear' was well known to the ancients (100 were taken to Rome in 61 BC by Domitius Ahenobarbus) the animal was only described after the type specimen was obtained by a Mr Crowther in 1841. Even then it was an extremely rare animal, a remnant from the days when North Africa was a land of forests, and it is generally thought that the animal died out within about fifty years of its recognition by science.

It was described as being slightly smaller but a little more robust than the North American Black Bear, with a short broad face, and short claws and with shaggy brownish black or black hair, although the under parts are an orangy-rufous colour. It was originally described as *Ursus crowtheri* or *Crowther's Bear* but long after it was deemed to have been wiped out Scientists revised their taxonomic ideas and demoted it to subspecific status under the name *Ursos arctos crowtherii*.

As far as mainstream zoology goes, there the matter rests, but up to the present day there have been rumours and vague reports of sightings. Heuvelmans noted in 'On the Track of Unknown Animals' that the species may still survive in Spanish Morocco, and there have been various tangential folkloric references from such diverse sources as 'The Master Musicians of Jajouka' and farmers of Marijuana plantations in the most remote parts of the mountains which suggest that, once again mainstream science has been over enthusiastic in consigning this creature to extinction. JD.

HELP

MYSTERY LIZARDS IN KENT

Suzanne Stebbings from Kent writes with a herpetological query. "I keep the European Green Lizards *Lacerta Viridis* and *Lacerta Tilineata*. One large female laid some eggs in late summer and I sent them to Chris Davis of the British Herpetological Society. Two of the eggs hatched, and Chris was amazed that the young lizards were not *Lacerta viridis*, but resembled the Canary Island *Gallotia stellina*. There was no mistake with the eggs, and the lizards did not hybridise with my *Gallotia stellina* as they are kept separately. *Gallotia* tend to be aggressive towards green lizards, and are unlikely to hybridize anyway.

Two months after hatching the lizards remain unidentified. They were suffering with rickets when hatched, but have made good progress on vitamin and mineral supplements.

Can anyone suggest an explanation?"

POLECAT PROJECT IN SCOTLAND

Dr Andrew Kitchener from the National Museums of Scotland writes after reading the article on Martens in issue one:

"At the National Museums of Scotland and in collaboration with Dr Johnny Birks of the Vincent Wildlife Trust we are currently investigating the specific identity of polecat like animals in the West Midlands. In particular we are trying to establish whether these are polecats originating in Wales, which are recolonising their former range since persecution levels have dropped and rabbit numbers have recovered, or feral polecat ferrets, or even introgressive hybrids between ferrets and recolonising polecats. This involves the study of pelage, skeletal characters and DNA.

We have also been investigating various unofficial reintroductions of captive bred polecats into various parts of Britain. At first we thought that this was confined to Cumbria and parts of Scotland, but new information indicates that these may have occurred elsewhere in southern England. Therefore it is more likely that records of polecats in England outside the West Midlands refer to unofficial introductions rather than the survival of relict populations.

Your readers could assist our project considerably by sending us carcasses of dead polecat - like (and even Marten - like) animals with uncrushed skulls that they find. We would be happy to refund postage but would point out that this research is fairly long term, because of the low rate of acquisition of specimens. Large sample sizes are required for statistically significant results. Anybody who can assist our project should freeze any carcasses they find and call me on 031-225-7534 before sending them on."

We would ask anyone finding Marten carcasses in the South of England or any Mustelid carcasses in the West Country to contact us first. We will pass all material on to Dr Kitchener but we would like to examine the carcasses first.

HELP

Mr D Walker from Enfield is interested in the 'big bird' phenomena so prevalent during the mid to late 1970s but he wonders if there have been any more recent sightings? Thanks to Mr Walker and to everyone else who has sent press cuttings. Please keep on sending them in. We are trying to build a definitive archive which will soon be available to subscribers through The Internet. We are also collecting specimens for a planned museum of Fortean Zoology but we need your help. Donations of money, time, specimens or equipment are always gratefully recieved. The Centre for Fortean Zoology is still a very young organisation and we need representatives across the country. If you feel brave enough to help and want to know what it entails please write or phone. We also want information on the following:

* Fortean Zoological Pub Signs. We know of , The Lambton Worm, several dragons, a wyvern or two, and three Black Dogs but we need a Yeti's Arms to complete our collection.

* Comics with a Zoo-Fortean theme. We know about *Alpha Flight* featuring Sasquatch and the R- Crumb *Bigfoot* series but there must be more.

* We will pay for Living specimens of any of the larger aquatic salamanders or any species of soft shelled turtle. Books, articles and press cuttings on the natural history of Hong Kong.

* lists of preserved Martens in British Museums and information on the Sutherland Polecat.

* Our Lancashire representative is collecting data on strange fish in UK waters.

* We want all sorts of specimens including a preserved 4 legged chicken and a halved gynandromorph butterfly. If you have anything that you think may interest us please get in touch.

PLACES TO GO AND PEOPLE TO SEE

During our travels around the country over the Summer we have visited a number of places of interest to the enquiring Fortean and should you be in the area at any time we strongly urge you to go and visit them.

TORQUAY AQUARIUM. As well as a well presented and interesting collection of fish and marine life, there is a fascinating display of press cuttings and photographs on a range of marine mysteries including Sea Serpents and Giant Squid. There is also an extremely large Leathery Turtle (dead) which was washed up on a West Country beach several years ago.

PLYMOUTH AQUARIUM This features a display of sightings of Cetacea and stranded Turtles as well as a preserved two headed dogfish.

PARADISE PARK, HAYLE, CORNWALL. One of the best bird gardens we have visited it includes a colony of a recently rediscovered species of macaw as well as several other species extinct, (or nearly so) in the wild.

POTTER'S MUSEUM OF CURIOSITY, BOLVENTOR, CORNWALL. This is possibly the most amazing treasure trove of fortana that I have ever been privileged to examine. Founded in the last century this collection of wonderful things is an object lesson to us all of what a museum should be and in these dull and tedious days at the end of the millenium so seldom is. There will be an article on the museum in a future issue and we are preparing a book on this priceless and irreplaceable collection!

BOOKS.

Keltic Animal Lore and Shamanism by Kaledon Naddair (Keltia Publications)
This budget priced (£2.99 each) two volume work is an eclectic and fascinating work of scholarship from the pen of a man who deserves a far wider public profile than that which he actually achieves. Cross referencing from subjects as diverse as Ogham script, Celtic mysticism, Herbalism and even conventional zoology he paints a picture of a complex and beautiful world which is now almost lost to us. I was initially a little phased by the inclusion of some of his poetry along side descriptions of ancient Celtic animals and men, but he is a good poet and his poetry complements his prose in what is a demanding but ultimately fulfilling journey through the animal lore of ancient Scotland. I cannot recommend this book too highly. Contact Keltia Publications at PO Box 307, Edinburgh, Scotland EH9 1XA

The Book of The Toad by Robert Degraaf (Lutterworth Press)

A beautifully produced collection of folklore, history, poetry and prose which explores man's attitude towards the toad, a gentle and beautiful creature who like so many others has been treated so cruelly across history. This is a fascinating sourcebook for all herpeto-fortean investigators but if I have a criticism, it is that it is too glossy and like a McDonalds Hamburger it promises more than it delivers and leaves the consumer ultimately unfulfilled.

MAGAZINES.

We welcome an exchange of publications with other magazines within our sphere of interest (and as anyone who has ever seen The Editorial bookshelf will vouch, that is pretty wide).

HOAX, 64 Beechgrove, Aberhonduu, Powys, Cymru, UK, LD3 9ET This magazine is wonderful. It gives an anarchic and funny insight into both the hoaxes of its title and the genesis of much contemporary folklore and the issue we were given recently even includes an article on Cryptozoological hoaxes.

NEXUS, PO Box 177, Kempton IL, 60946-0177 USA A beautifully produced round up of alternative science, and fortana. It borders on new age philosophy but does so without getting twee and annoying like so many of its peers. A good, sturdy magazine.

THE SKEPTIC, PO Box 475, Manchester M60 2TH. I like this magazine but then I would. Any magazine which good naturedly debunks the soggy end of fortana and playfully ridicules new age thinking is OK by me!

ANIMALS, FREEPOST, SIDUP, KENT. This is the official magazine of the British Zoos supporters Club and it arrived quite unsolicited on my doormat the other morning. The most recent issue includes a fascinating article on Asiatic and Barbary Lions and Przewalski's Horse. Probably the best magazine of its kind that I have seen.

TOUCHSTONE, Surrey Earth Mysteries Group, 25 Albert Rd, Addlestone, Surrey. An excellent little magazine covering Earth Mysteries, UFOs etc. Well worth a look.

TEMS NEWS, 115 Hollybush Lane, Hampton, Middlesex. A wonderful collection of fortana from veteran UFO investigator Lionel Beer. It is as good as you might expect it to be.

FROM OUR FILES..

In the news pages of this issue is an account of a horrific attack on a baby by an Urban Fox, We have searched through our files for a number of other nasty pieces of foxlore.

There are a number of accounts of quasi vampiric attacks on domestic animals from all over the world but in Devon there was a spate of such attacks on sheep during the winter of 1951/2 when a large number of animals were found on Ugborough Beacon with twin punctures to the neck and a large amount of blood missing. For reasons that can only be described as the flimsiest pieces of circumstantial evidence these killings were blamed on foxes. (*trans Devonshire Assoc Vol 88 p251*). Another interesting story comes from Devon folklorist Theo Brown who wrote in *Tales of A Dartmoor Village* about a man who disappeared on Dartmoor one winter and whose bones and skull were eventually found by a foxes hole on the side of Longaford Tor. Ever since then ghostly foxes are reputed to bark and show themselves on The Tor in the week before Christmas.

As is his wont Petrovic has contributed this excerpt from a tome called *Confessions of a Pop Performer* (published in 1975)

. 'Mr Muckredge shakes his head. *'I can't do that. We've already got the old age pensioner who was bitten by a fox'.* Mr M leans forward challengingly. *'At the top of a block of high rise flats! She heard something at the door, opened it, and the fox ran in and bit her!'*

'It must have been a dog', I say. *'You wouldn't get a fox up there. I mean it wasn't being chased by a pack of hounds was it?'*

Mr M's face clouds over for a second. *'I didn't check that. No, I don't think it could have been. Otherwise people would have seen them. Especially if they'd had the horses and the pink jackets. People notice things like that on The Clem Attlee estate.'*

The final word must come from the entirely mythical Lazarus Long who noted *"when the fox bites...SMILE"*.

.....AND IN THE END

The biggest problem that any of us have in producing this magazine is that there is simply TOO much information and too much happening for us to cover it all. As we were going to press we recieved reports of a giant worm in Eastbourne, a Sea Serpent in The South China Sea and the capture of the first living specimen of The Vu Quang Ox , as well as a host of big cat reports and a number of out of place birds. The next issue of Animals and Men will be published in October but having found that the actual contents of Issue Two bore no resemblance to what we 'said' would be in it, so we make no claims whatsoever for what will be in it, but we promise you that it will be a corker!

